



photo: Jennifer Anderson

Califas is a Chicano word for California and Aztlán (South West region), but for many people of Mexican descent it has a spiritual as well as geographical meaning. Demographic studies show that Chicanos will become the majority group of the state in the 1980's. Yet cultural recognition of this group remains relatively unknown and invalidated.

The arts have always played a major role in the lives of Third World people. Deeply rooted in culture, ethnic art serves as a necessary outlet for our self-expression and heritage.

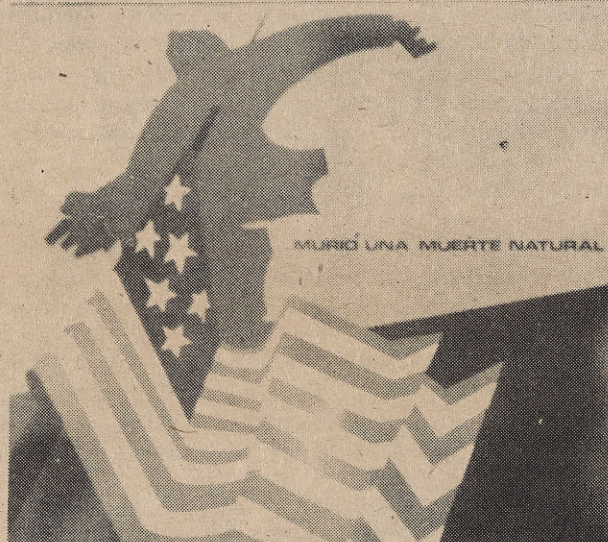


photo: Jennifer Anderson

In Santa Cruz we are very fortunate to be able to experience the '360 degrees of *Califas*' of Raza art form. Eduardo Carrillo, one of the featured artists who teaches studio and Mexican Art History at UCSC states: "Juventino Experanza of Oakes College, Cruz Zamarron, community artists, and others have worked for over a year to put this exhibition together. I feel this will give us an opportunity to become acquainted with Chicano art in some depth."

Califas is currently displayed at the Mary Porter Sesnon Gallery, which houses the works of fifteen California Chicano and Chicana artists. The exhibit highlights artists who share a common vision; they identify with art outside of the traditional mainstream.

CALIFAS: 360 DEGREES OF CHICANO ART



The purpose of *Califas* is to gather and document the work of artists who have had a significant impact on the Mexicano/Chicano Art Movements in California. The exhibition represents a cross-section of artists working in media such as painting, drawing, ceramics, and multi-media sculpture. Featured artists are: Judy Baca, Eduardo Carrillo, Roberto Chávez, Rupert Maradiaga, Sue Martínez, José Montoya, Malquias Montoya, Ramses Noriega, Ernie Palomino, Roberto Torres, Estéban Villa, and Rene Yanez. Many have displayed their work together in national and international exhibitions, and have formed an identity for Chicano and Mexicano artists in California.

The exhibit highlights artists who share a common vision: they identify with art outside of the mainstream.

The enormous cultural influences of the early Mexicano masters, are clearly evident in the works presented in *Califas* art. Judy Baca along with Willie Herron, depict the subtle yet sharp expression of realism, associated with Alfaro Siqueiros paintings. Still other works reflect styles similar to Mexicano muralist Diego Rivera. Some works explore the simplicity in drawing. Others express sophistication using broad forms and brilliant colors, so often associated with traditional Mexicano folklore, while Pre-Columbian art forms proved to be a major direction for Eduardo Carrillo and his fresco painting.

As one walks through the gallery to view the show, there is little doubt left in the minds of most that they have just completed the full circle in the realm of the 360 degrees of *Califas* art.

by Ras Tashann



photo: Jennifer Anderson